

Minutes of the MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Wednesday 20 November 2013 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Cllr: Ms A-M.A. Vincent (Vice –Chairman in the Chair)

Cllrs: G.J. Ackerman Ms G.E. Massey
 J.T. May D.R. Tett
 Ms S.J. Williams (ex-officio)

Also present: Cllr D.G. Rickard (until 8.00pm)

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no speakers in the public forum.

67. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Miss S.A. Brown, C.M. Ray and Mrs M.J. Ray.

68. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 September 2013 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

69. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ms A-M.A. Vincent declared an interest in agenda item 22 (minute 88) Skills Training Bridport – Funding Request Update as a member of the group. Cllr Vincent left the room for this item.

Councillor Ms S.J. Williams declared an interest in agenda item 11 (minute 77) as the Town Council's representative on the Bridport Area Development Trust.

70. MARKET AND BUSINESS LIAISON SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 22 October 2013 be received and noted and the recommendation therein be adopted as below:

(Min 6) Tourism and Bridport Promotion

RESOLVED that the issues raised be noted and the Town Clerk report back to this Sub Committee on options to take these issues forward.

71. CODE OF CONDUCT DISPENSATION REQUESTS

There were no items reported.

72. TOWN PLAN PROJECTS UPDATE

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2749.

RESOLVED: that the latest position on Town Plan Projects Priority 1 be noted, as in the report.

73. FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2013/2014 – 2nd REVISION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2748.

RECOMMEND: that the 2nd revision of the estimates for the year 2013/2014 be approved.

74. BUDGET SETTING 2014/15

The Town Clerk reported on the issues for the Council in the consideration of next year's budget, including:

- the position on the grant from the District Council in respect of the localisation of Council Tax.
- the possibility of more service devolution options, with pressures on the principal council budgets.
- the possibility of local councils being subject to capping of their precept.

The budget would be looked at initially at the Best Value, Scrutiny and Town Plan Sub Committee on 10 December 2013 and then referred on to this Committee and the full Council in January.

RESOLVED: that the budget setting process for 2014/15 be noted.

75. TOWN HALL HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION PROJECT

The Town Clerk reported that the snagging works were complete and the invoices being processed, to enable the final claim to be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund by the end of this month. He would then like to arrange a meeting of the Town Hall and Bucky Doo Working Party to receive the detailed budget and consider other matters relating to the project, including the layout of Bucky Doo Square.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

76. SERVICES ADMINISTERED BY THE SURVEYOR

Councillors considered a report of the Town Surveyor, ENCL: 2758.

(a) Updates were provided on the following: -

- (i) Mountfield – essential maintenance work was complete and the additional costs would be met through the service charge.

- (ii) Borough Gardens – AONB funding remained to be allocated on new planting.
- (iii) Street Lighting – the new heritage columns were now being installed.
- (iv) South Street Toilets – the snagging was now complete, to enable the costs to be included within the Town Hall budget. Members also asked if the District Council could be contacted regarding the frequency of the cleaning and the possibility of a shelter being provided.
- (v) Bike Racks – these had now been installed.
- (vi) New Zealand – the working group would be meeting again soon and the use of the temporary notice board would be monitored.
- (vii) Planned Property Maintenance – it would be necessary, as part of the budget making process, to consider provision for necessary maintenance works on the Town Council’s buildings.
- (viii) Jurassic Music Festival – the Town Council had been approached about the possibility of a festival next year and this was to be discussed with organisers and reported back to members.

(b) West Bay Play Equipment

RESOLVED: that, following the regular assessment of all play areas and the identification of essential work, expenditure of £2,778 be approved from existing budgets. The work was for equipment repairs at the West Bay Play Area.

77. LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE CONSERVATION PLAN

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2751.

RECOMMEND: to agree any comments on the Literary & Scientific Institute Conservation Plan.

78. YOUTH COUNCIL WORKING GROUP AND ADVISERS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2750.

RECOMMEND: that the Youth Council be invited to nominate up to 4 young people to be Youth Advisers to the Town Council and the Town Council be asked to ratify the appointments, when the nominations are made and subject to further information on the working arrangements and examples from similar schemes elsewhere.

79. SKATE PARK REFURBISHMENT

The Town Surveyor reported for information on the latest position on the project. Following the provision of new surfacing, the equipment was being put back. It was hoped that funding could then be identified, for the new equipment to be provided next year.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

80. STANDARDS AND CODE OF CONDUCT – NEW ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2753.

Members noted the changes to the process for the District Council to consider complaints against town and parish councillors. If a councillor is found to have breached the Code of Conduct, the matter would be referred back to the town or parish council, to decide on the sanction. The sanctions available were now limited and it was felt that advice should be sought from the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils, on the process to be put in place by the Town Council

RECOMMEND: that the Town Clerk report back on the arrangements to be put in place, to enable the Town Council to consider any cases referred back to it, under the new process for handling complaints against councillors under the Code of Conduct.

81. WDDC LAND DISPOSAL UPDATE

The Town Clerk updated members on the transfers of land at Bridport Football Club and the Salt House and former toilet block at West Bay.

The update was noted.

82. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Ms G.E. Massey reported on the recent successful Apple Day at the Community Orchard and thanked the Town Council for all its support.

Cllr D.R. Tett, on behalf of the Millennium Green Trust, reported on the granting of planning permission for the northern access on to Coneygar Hill.

83. WEST BAY WATER SPORTS CENTRE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Surveyor, ENCL: 2759.

The Town Surveyor reported that following the tendering process, the contract was to be awarded for works at a total cost of £48,500. This would enable the main building works to be undertaken. The Town Council currently had £36,000 earmarked for this scheme, but West Dorset District Council had indicated that they would be able to find the additional funding through S106 contributions.

RESOLVED: that, subject to receiving the additional funding required from West Dorset District Council, the works proceed at a total cost of £48,500 and the principles of the management arrangements be approved as in the report, subject to approval of the detailed lease arrangements by this Committee in January.

84. TOWN COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR TOWN EVENTS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2756.

The Town Clerk outlined the support given by the Town Council over the year and the need to consider resources for next year, in the discussions on the budget.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

85. SPIRIT OF BRIDPORT

The Town Clerk reported on the conclusion of the Chalk and Cheese funding and the evaluation of the project, which had been well received by the County Council. A copy of the evaluation report was available for members.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

86. HEALTH AND SAFETY AND STAFF HANDBOOK ADOPTION

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2752.

RECOMMEND:

- (a) that the health and safety policy/employee health and safety handbook and staff handbook be adopted by the Council, subject to consultation with staff and the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to make any amendments.
- (b) that the general risk assessment and prioritised action plan be reported to the next Best Value & Scrutiny Sub Committee, for detailed consideration.
- (c) that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to revise contracts of employment, to ensure they reflect the latest legal position, in accordance with the advice received and in consultation with staff.

87. OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVES

RECOMMEND: that the following appointments be approved:

Hat Festival - Cllr Ms S.J. Williams.
Bridport Heritage Forum - to be appointed.
West Bay Forum – to be appointed.

88. SKILLS TRAINING BRIDPORT – FUNDING REQUEST UPDATE

Cllr G.J. Ackerman took the chair for this item

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2754.

Cllr D.R. Tett asked that his concern be recorded regarding funding for a salaried post.

RESOLVED: that the update on the funding for the Skills Training Bridport Project Co-ordinator post be noted and it be agreed that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to release the Town Council's £1,000 funding, when all other funding is in place and confirmation that the appointment can be progressed.

89. STANDING FOR ELECTION IN THE UK CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2755.

RECOMMEND: to agree any comments on the consultation on Standing for Election.

90. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FUNDING

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2757.

The District Council had been asked to designate the area, with a decision expected by early February. In the meantime, discussions would be taking place with the participating councils, with advice from the District Council, regarding the outline project plan, the communications strategy, funding and the proposals for the establishment of a Steering Group.

The Committee was asked to earmark funding at this time, but this would not be committed until other funding was identified and proposals brought back to this Committee for approval.

RECOMMEND: that the update be noted and it be RESOLVED: that £5,000 from the Town Council's Localism Act budget be earmarked to support the delivery of the neighbourhood plan.

91. MARKET WINTER RATES FOR WEDNESDAYS – JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2014 AND TIMING OF CHRISTMAS MARKET

The Town Clerk reported on the arrangements in previous years, to reduce the charge for the Wednesday market in January and February to no more than £5.

It was also noted that there would not be a Wednesday market on Christmas Day or New Year's Day.

RESOLVED: that for Wednesdays only in January and February 2014, registered traders be charged no more than £5.

**92. MULTI USE GAMES ARENA –
REPORT BACK ON CONTRACT AWARD AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The Town Surveyor reported on the outcome of the tendering process and the award of the contract, to enable the works to proceed. This was in accordance with the decision taken by this Committee, at its last meeting, that the Town Surveyor be given delegated authority to award the contract.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

93. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk reported on the recent Remembrance Parade and the support given by the Town Council and also the forthcoming Christmas Festival on 4 December 2013.

There were no further announcements.

94. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Town Clerk presented List 3 of the 2013/14 accounts, in the sum of £164,682.99, which had been authorised for payment since the last meeting. This having been tabled for members' information, was approved and signed by the Chairman.

95. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED: that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was agreed that in the public interest the public be temporarily excluded, whilst the Committee considered the following matters:

96. PROPERTY MATTERS

The Town Clerk reported on the latest position in respect of the Magistrates' Court and that there was due to be a meeting early in the New Year to progress this issue.

The update was noted.

97. STAFFING MATTERS

The Town Clerk reported on the Lengthsman post and the opportunity to recruit a further apprentice.

RESOLVED:

(a) that the Lengthsman post be made permanent on the existing terms and the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to make the necessary amendments to the contract and job description.

(b) that the Town Council expresses its interest in taking a further apprentice under a new West Dorset District/Dorset County Council scheme (with a further £3,000 District Council contribution to the costs) and the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to progress this matter, within existing budgets and with a report back prior to making an appointment.

98. CCTV SCHEME

The Town Clerk reported for information on the latest position with the CCTV scheme and monitoring arrangements

The meeting closed at **8.40 p.m.**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 15 January 2014